2008-04333/

News Release

SPORT NORTH BOARD EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER REGIONAL SOCCER SELECTIONS

YELLOWKNIFE (December 6, 2007) The Board of Directors of the Sport North Federation will meet in an extraordinary session to discuss the controversy over the regional selections for soccer. During a Sport Forum in Yellowknife on November 17th, a delegation of Yellowknife soccer parents and coaches expressed concern with the format for regional soccer selections. Media coverage has focused on the concerns of the Yellowknife soccer community. At the recent sitting of the Legislative Assembly, Yellowknife MLAs questioned the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Hon. Michael McLeod, on the matter.

Abe Theil, President of the Sport North Federation, states the Board is well aware of the issue and has been following the coverage in the media and in the Legislative Assembly. He states, "Our vision is to be a leader in sport development and to ensure that opportunities in sport, based on fair play, are accessible to all residents of the NWT. I have had the pleasure of playing for Team NWT at previous Arctic Winter Games, and I know how much it means to a young person to make the team. The Board is deeply concerned that the process that led to the regional selections for soccer may create serious divisions in the soccer community. We hope to provide some recommendations that may satisfy all stakeholders and ensure that the 2008 Arctic Winter Games is remembered not for controversy, but for excellent competition."

Richard Daitch, Chair of the Leadership Committee, states, "The Sport North Federation represents territorial sport organizations and is dedicated to developing sport at every level of participation in the Northwest Territories. We are dismayed that the format for regional soccer selections has become a political issue and that there have been decisions made relevant to this subject that were made without the knowledge and approval of this organization. We see from media coverage and Hansard that this issue has potential to drive a wedge into sport communities throughout the NWT. The Sport North Federation' core values are excellence, respect, transparency and accountability, inclusion, the joy of sport and innovation. Any decisions we make should honour and uphold all these core values. Let's remember that the decisions we make in the coming weeks will have a huge impact on the hopes and dreams of our young athletes throughout the NWT. We owe it to these young athletes to get it right"

The Sport North Federation Board will meet on Tuesday, December 11/07 to address the issue and will announce their recommendations/findings immediately following the meeting.

- 30 -

For additional information, contact:
Abe Theil, President, Sport North Federation
(867) 873-3441

Ekati diamond mine
Sponsor of Team NWT at the 2008 AWG
FIRST AIR The Airline of the North
NorthwesTel
Bell
The Coast Fraser Tower